

**Board of Architectural Review**

DATE: June 12, 2015  
TO: Board of Architectural Review Chair and Members  
THROUGH: Jason Sutphin, Community Development Division Chief *JDS*  
FROM: Kelly O'Brien, AICP, BAR Liaison *KO*  
SUBJECT: **Novus Fairfax Gateway – Work Session**

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Relevant Code Sections  
2. Excerpts from Staff Analysis for City Council Approval of General Development Plan  
3. Plans

**Nature of Request**

1. Case Number: 15060027
2. Address: 11101 & 11091 Fairfax Blvd
3. Request: New construction of mixed use buildings
4. Applicant: Novus Gateway LLC
5. Applicant's Representative: Sean Bowers
6. Zoning: C-2, I-2, HCOD Highway Corridor Overlay District

**Staff Comments**

**Background and Proposal:**

The site is located in Kamp Washington, situated between Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway, and is immediately to the west of the Jermantown Cemetery. The site is currently improved with five commercial buildings located on four separate parcels that make up the site total 8.33-acres. The subject site has most recently been used for motor vehicle related businesses, and a former productions and manufacturing company vacated the larger warehouse structure in 2012.

On January 26, 2015, the applicant received City Council approval for a rezoning, special exceptions, special use permits and variances to redevelop the entire site with a mixed-use project. The applicant proposes to construct 395 multifamily apartments and 29,000 square feet of total commercial space. Of these 29,000 square feet, approximately 4,000 square feet would be office space for a non-profit group, and the remaining 25,000 square feet would be general ground floor retail. Although the renderings depict an active street front with what appear to be commercial tenant spaces facing the interior of the site along the eastern side of the parking deck, the applicant has described those spaces as ancillary services and amenities for the apartments.

The proposed building height varies, with three and four story buildings fronting Lee Highway and Fairfax Boulevard, and five and six story buildings central to the site. The plans depict a 7 story parking

deck with a half story amenity space on top of the deck. The entire parking structure would be wrapped with residential uses and facades.

Conditions of the approval that pertain to the BAR include:

1. Development of the subject site shall be in substantial conformance with the attached plans and associated submission materials stamped "Received February 19, 2015", and the applicant's proffer statement dated February 24, 2015.

The first draft of the site plan has been submitted to staff for review and comment. Staff is conducting a proffer compliance review. The applicant is seeking a work session with the Board to review the proposed architecture so that they may incorporate any comments into a final design to be approved at a later meeting. This work session is intended to focus on architectural elements, materials and site details.

The elevations submitted by the applicant on June 12, 2015 provide views of both what is currently proposed and what was shown in the General Development Plan (GDP) approved by City Council. Staff is aware of changes and is reviewing these for conformance to the GDP.

## **ATTACHMENT #1: Relevant Code Sections**

### **Sec. 110-1071. Designation of districts.**

(a) The architectural control overlay district is hereby designated as all land in the city which is located outside an historic district and zoned for other than single-family detached residences. In addition, any lot, parcel or area of land within any area zoned for single-family detached residences outside an historic district which is used for other than single-family detached residences or which is the subject of an application for a special use permit or building permit involving any such other use shall be part of the architectural control overlay district. The provisions of this article shall not apply to single-family attached residences after such residences have been initially erected.

### **Sec. 110-1072. Approval required for improvements.**

(a) No structure or improvement located on any land within the architectural control overlay district, including significant landscape features appurtenant to such structure or improvement, shall be erected, reconstructed, altered or restored until the plans for the exterior architectural features and landscaping have been approved by the board of architectural review or the city council in accordance with the provisions of article XIX of this chapter. Plans for signs appurtenant to new and renovated shopping centers, and as otherwise provided for multi-tenant commercial buildings in subsection 110-180(b) shall also be subject to board of architectural review or the city council approval. The board of architectural review shall confine its review and approval to only those features which are subject to view from a public street, way or place. The provisions of this article shall not apply to regular maintenance of a structure, improvement or site; however, an exterior color change of a structure, or substantial portion thereof, shall be deemed an alteration and not regular maintenance.

### **Sec. 110-915. Powers and duties.**

The board of architectural review shall have the following powers and duties:

(2) To review and decide any application requesting approval for exterior architectural features of any structure, improvement or significant landscape feature associated with such structure or improvement to be erected, reconstructed or substantially altered in an architectural control district.

## **ATTACHMENT 2: Excerpts from Staff Comments for City Council Review of General Development Plan**

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; OTHER CITY POLICY**

#### **Community Appearance**

The Community Appearance Plan (CAP) emphasizes improving the City's appearance by applying aesthetic guidelines and improved landscape standards to public and private development. In addition, architectural and site design details such as lighting and public and commercial signage are discussed. Landscape planting, signage, site details and architecture are evaluated with regard for traditional townscape principles. (P. 98)

"The Corridors component of the CAP recommends a program of improvements concurrent with planned road widening, redevelopment and new development projects. By programming extensive planting of various species trees as well as installation of planted center medians, decorative light fixtures and interesting site details, the Community Appearance Plan seeks to spur the transformation of the City's corridors. The Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan addresses many of the concerns noted in the Corridors component regarding the Fairfax Boulevard corridor and its intersection with Chain Bridge Road in particular." (CA. p. 2)

#### **CA-1.3 Implement design guidelines for major commercial areas.**

"The Community Appearance Plan, which outlines design guidelines for Old Town Fairfax and the Fairfax Boulevard and Main Street corridors, should be consistently and vigorously implemented. These guidelines establish the appropriate treatment and detailing of facades, the use of materials and color schemes, massing and scale of buildings, appropriate signage, and parking lot design, circulation and landscaping. The guidelines represent official City policy to guide the various boards and commissions in reviewing public and private development proposals. Special treatment should be applied at "crossroad intersections" in the City (e.g. Northfax, Kamp Washington, Fairfax Circle, Main Street (at Pickett Road)) to reinforce the landmark status of those areas." (CA. p. 5)

In the Comprehensive Plan, an excerpt from the Community Appearance Plan (CAP) includes the following recommendation:

"Seeking developer commitments of quality architecture, landscape planting, lighting and signage during the redevelopment, rezoning and special use permitting process...."

The subject site is located within the Kamp Washington triangle, which is situated at the eastern end of the City. along the "gateway to city", situated at both the northern and eastern entrances to the City. The applicant proffers to use high-quality materials for the building façade that would include brick, stone, or a combination of these materials and generally conform to the character and quality of the illustrative elevations depicted in the plans. The site currently has a minimal amount of landscaping and open space. The applicant proposes to increase on-site landscaping, while creating an enhanced on-site pedestrian way.

The applicant plans to provide around 38 feet of landscaping and sidewalks between the buildings and Lee Highway, and 46 feet along Fairfax Boulevard. The Lee Highway and Fairfax Boulevard frontages would also see enhanced planting in both the public rights-of-way and on the subject site. These areas would include enhanced landscaping. City standard acorn lights are proposed along the street frontages, and the existing utilities located along the site's Fairfax Boulevard and Lee Highway frontages, along with the undergrounding of all on-site utilities. No signage is proposed at this time, but it is noted that all signage requires City review and permitting. Any signage depicted on the plans are for illustrative purposes only.

*Staff believes that the GDP shows the incorporation of quality design and materials for the buildings and a variety of landscape improvements that speak to recommendations mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan about keeping the City's infrastructure up-to-date. Further, the site design reflects the building siting and landscape form recommended by the Comprehensive Plan and successfully implements design guidelines called out to create a sense of place in the Kamp Washington area.*

### **BUILDING DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE**

The proposed architecture presents a series of buildings that provide articulation and varied design elements that serve the break up both the buildings and their wall sections and rooflines. The plans and proffers present quality architectural materials such as brick, stone, simulated stone, metal, and cementitious products that would be used to provide consistent design on all facades of each building. Mechanical equipment would be screened by parapets or would be fully concealed.

The proposed parking structure would be completely enveloped by finished facades of commercial and residential uses, and would appear as a fully formed building rather than a parking structure. The parking structure would contain seven levels of parking, with attached residential and commercial surrounding it at up to five stories with a highly pitched roof to fully conceal the parking structure behind. This would be the tallest point on the site, with a proposed building height of five stories or 69 feet. As this qualifies as a single building, the zoning ordinance would base height off of the outside walls to the mid- point of the roof surrounding the parking structure.

It is noted that should this application be approved that the applicant will be required to submit an application for architectural review and approval by the Board of Architectural Review. This would include architectural details, screening, lighting, landscaping, appurtenances and accessory elements, and materials. Individual storefront designs would be presented at that time. It is also noted that while signage is shown on several pages of the plans, signage is for illustrative purposes and this application does not contain any requests for signage.

*Staff believes that the proposed architecture is in general conformance with the objectives of the Community Appearance Plan and Comprehensive Plan. Staff believes that the proposed architecture would provide a sense of place and quality element in the Kamp Washington node, and that it would blend well with future redevelopment.*